Highlights of Natural Resource Conditions and Trends in Oregon From 1982 to 1997

National Resources Inventory

May 2002

1997 NRI Results (Revised December 2000)

About the NRI

The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistically based survey initiated in 1982. It has been designed and implemented using scientific principles to assess the conditions and trends of soil, water, and related resources on non-federal lands in the United States.

Inventories are conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

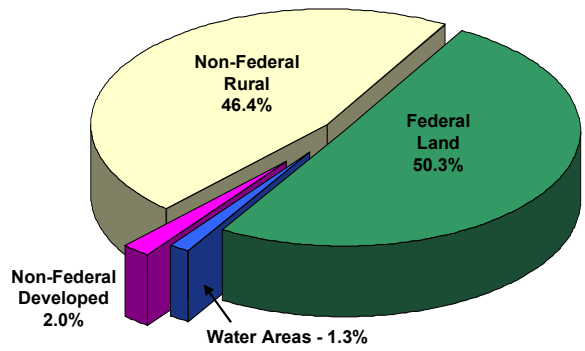
The NRI estimates highlighted in this summary are based on sampling at more than 17,000 sites in Oregon. Data was collected at more than 800,000 sites nationally.

NRI Summary

This summary includes graphic highlights and explanations of the Oregon NRI estimates. For more information, call the Oregon NRCS Resources Inventory Team in Beaverton, Oregon at 503-690-6794, visit the Oregon NRCS website (www.or.nrcs.usda.gov) and click on NRI.

- **State Surface Area** – In 1997, Oregon's 62.2 million acres consisted of 50.3 percent federal lands, 46.4 percent non-federal rural lands, 2.0 percent non-federal developed lands (urban and rural transportation), and 1.3 percent permanent water.
- **Erosion by Water Reduced** – Sheet and rill erosion fell from 17.8 million tons/year in 1982 to 9.7 million tons/year in 1997 on croplands, pasturelands, and retired agricultural lands in Oregon.
- **Increase in Urban Lands** – Urban lands grew from an estimated 585,000 acres in 1982 to 845,000 acres in 1997. This is a 44 percent increase.
- **Wetland Gains and Losses** – Western states had a net increase of 20,000 acres of Palustrine and Estuarine wetlands from 1992 to 1997. This was the only region of the country to show a net increase. There were 1.4 million acres of these wetland types in Oregon in 1997.

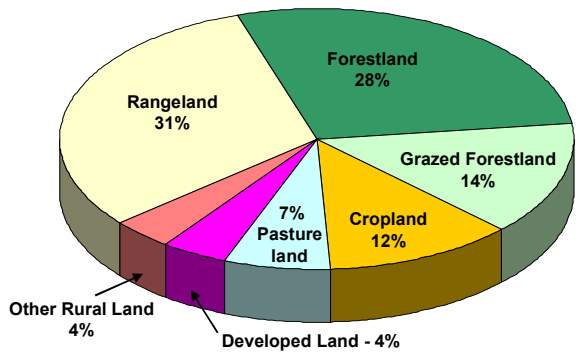
Surface Area of Oregon



The 1997 NRI indicates Oregon's surface area is about 62.2 million acres. Slightly more than half of Oregon is federal land.

Private landowners and local, state and tribal governments have the responsibility for conservation on non-federal lands.

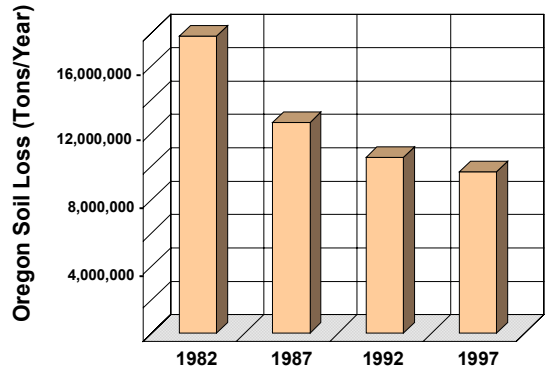
Oregon's Non-Federal Lands



Nonfederal land is predominantly rural and supports a variety of land-based industries.

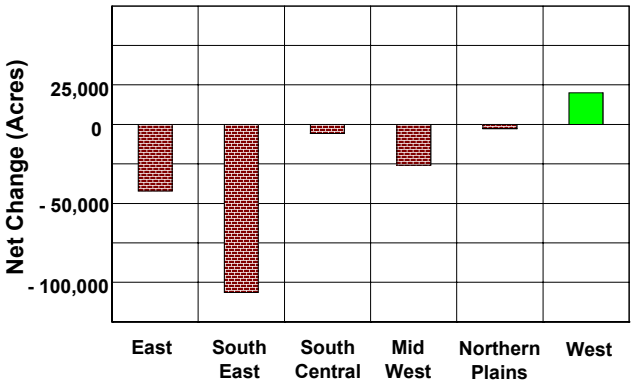
Oregon's non-federal lands in 1997 included an estimated 8.4 million acres of forestland, 9.3 million acres of rangeland, 4.2 million acres of grazed forestland, 3.8 million acres of cropland, and 2 million acres of pastureland.

Soil Loss by Water Erosion



- Sheet and rill erosion by water on Oregon's croplands and pasturelands has been reduced by more than 8 million tons of soil per year from 1982 to 1997.
- NRI estimates indicate 960,000 acres of Oregon's agricultural lands still had water erosion rates above a sustainable level in 1997.
- Controlling erosion not only sustains the long-term productivity of the land, but also affects the amount of soil, pesticides, fertilizer, and other substances that move into the nation's waters.
- Through NRCS programs many farmers and ranchers have applied conservation practices to reduce the effects of erosion by water. As a result, erosion rates on cultivated cropland fell 35 percent from 4.6 to 3.0 tons/acre/year from 1982 to 1997.

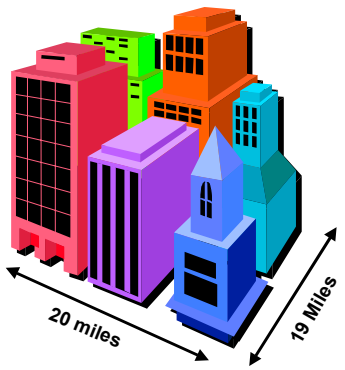
Palustrine and Estuarine Wetlands Net Change in the U.S. From 1992 to 1997 by NRCS Region



- The West was the only region of the country that had a net increase of Palustrine and Estuarine wetlands from 1992 to 1997. This estimated increase of 20,000 acres was the result of 56,200 acres of new wetlands and 36,200 acres of losses. These estimates account for water areas and non-federal lands.
- The smallest net decrease of these wetland types was in the Northern Plains, followed by South Central, Midwest, East, and Southeast.
- Nationally, 49 percent of losses were attributed to development, 26 percent to agriculture, 13 percent to miscellaneous causes, and 12 percent to silviculture.
- In the west, 33 percent of losses were attributed to agriculture, 29 percent to development, 28 percent to miscellaneous causes, and 10 percent to silviculture.

Oregon Natural Resource Lands Converted to Urban Lands

In the 15 years from 1982 to 1997, an estimated 249,800 acres of Oregon's cropland, pastureland, rangeland, and forestland were converted to urban lands. That's an area roughly 20 miles long and 19 miles wide.



- Oregon's natural resource lands were converted to urban lands at an average rate of 15,550 acres per year from 1982 to 1992. The rate of conversion increased by 21 percent to 18,860 acres per year during the 1992 to 1997 period.
- For the entire U.S., the average rate of natural resource land conversion to urban lands was 1.3 million acres per year from 1982 to 1992. This increased 57 percent to nearly 2.1 million acres per year during the 1992 to 1997 period.
- In 1982, 1.9 percent of the Oregon's non-federal land was classified as urban land. By 1997, the percent of urban land had increased to 2.8 percent.
- Nationally, urban land comprised 2.7 percent of the non-federal land total in 1982. In 1997, this had increased to 5.1 percent.